

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell, May 26, 1893, with transcript

JOURNAL (Notes concerning vegetables) Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. May 25th, Tuesday, 1893.

This afternoon examined the jars which had been filled with fresh vegetables in October 1892 — and December 1892.

(1). All the jars not provided with tin caps exhibited an apparently empty space at top — and upon opening one or two of these — we found decomposition at work although the vegetables looked fresh and good. For example, jar of cauliflower showed air space at (a) — level of liquid at (b). Cauliflower looked good. Reversed jar — unscrewed lid — foul smelling gas escaped — and then vegetable did not smell in abnormal manner. Washed cauliflower in fresh cold water — no disagreeable smell — other than usual smell of cauliflower. Maggie cooked this cauliflower this evening and it was delicious. Perfectly good — although undoubtedly some change had been at work. All the jars not provided with tin lids in which to stand — showed air space at top of jar.

(2). All the jars provided with tin lids seemed to be as perfect as the day they were put up. No air space at top. The tin lids had been filled with different liquids i.e. one was filled with melted lard, another with beeswax, another with parafine wax, another with olive oil and another with molasses.

We opened the one sealed with olive oil. First in order to get rid of the oil we poured cold water into the tin cap — oil floated out — seemed to have undergone some change — in nature of decomposition — oil smelled badly. Cleansed the cap and neck of the jar thoroughly before opening the jar.

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Contents (squash) found to be perfectly sweet and good. Maggie cooked it for supper. Good.

These experiments demonstrate the feasibility of preserving fresh vegetables in a very simple manner. Simply heat the vegetables in water sufficiently to sterilize the contents of jar and then prevent access of air.

Propose to preserve some vegetables and meat in similar manner but with deeper tin covers.

Without lid so that bottom of jar can be seen. With lid — whole jar completely enclosed by liquid — which may be allowed to solidify. Try mutton suet.

Process simple and can be handled by any ordinary farmer. Can also perhaps be made to give rise to new industry in preserved vegetables, meats and etc., — using glass or porcelain jars that can be used over and over again.

We can certainly preserve the vegetables that otherwise would go to waste on our place. Try following plan.

Screw on top — paper if necessary or advisable. Boil jars in boiler containing brine or oil or some liquid which can be heated above the boiling point of pure water.

A.G.B.